

YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava*

The marshy edges of ox-bows supported good numbers of birds, with 10 at Lake Pangua on 2 December, 45 at Lake Owa on 3 December and 10 at Lake Ambuve on 4 December. The area is likely to be a significant wintering ground, for a species thought to be very scarce in Papua New Guinea.

RESTLESS FLYCATCHER *Myiagra inquieta*

The species was previously only known from the southern Bensbach River area in Papua New Guinea, so singles near Komavai village, Lake Pangua on 26 April and at Obo station on 27 April 1995, and a pair found nesting on the roof beam of an abandoned hut at Lake Ambuve in April 1995, are noteworthy range extensions, several hundred kilometres further inland. The nest was a neat cup of dried grass and fine woody material containing a single whitish egg with dark spots. Apparently the first instance of nesting proven for New Guinea.

GREAT REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*

Usually considered to be a vagrant to the Australasian region. One was singing in reeds along the channel to the main river at Lake Ambuve on 4 December, readily recognised by the distinctive harsh song, large size and streaked breast. May be a far more regular visitor than previously realised.

FLY RIVER GRASSBIRD *Megalurus albolimbatus*

Two at Lake Daviumbu on 2 December, the type locality for the species; one at Lake Owa on 3 December. Recorded in April from Lake Pangua, Lake Owa and Lake Daviumbu, in floating *Echinochloa* and *Leersia* sp. grass mats, not *Cyperus* sedge beds as is the habitat at Bensbach. The species has a distinctive whistled call, a quiet, rising zeeee, and may be distinguished from Tawny Grassbird *M. timoriensis* by the prominent white edges to the black tertials, a gently rounded rather than ragged tail, orangish rump, whitish supercilium and underparts and an unstreaked orangish crown.

Lake Owa and Lake Pangua are new localities for the species which is a Papua New Guinea endemic previously known from Lake Daviumbu and the middle Bensbach river. The abundance of suitable habitat in the middle Fly suggests that this easily overlooked species may be more widely distributed than currently recognised and may occur across the border in West Irian.

BLACK MANNIKIN *Lonchura stygia*

Not recorded during December 1994, and only found at Lake Owa in April 1995, despite extensive searches at other apparently similar sites during both expeditions. We saw a total of over 30 individuals in small flocks, most with flocks of Grey-crowned Mannikin *Lonchura nevermanni*, which was widespread in the area in both December and April. *Lonchura stygia* was invariably seen at rest in floating or emergent grass, especially *Oryza* and *Echinochloa* spp. in full seed head, feeding on *Echinochloa* seeds like its congener.

Birds were in a variety of plumages (Gregory 1995b), and are clearly very scarce in the Obo area where the species is presumably nomadic, dependent on supplies of seeds. The species is only otherwise known in Papua New Guinea from Lake Daviumbu, being endemic to the western Trans-Fly. We did not find it at this site during our visits and our observations suggest it is rather rare.

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IN BRIEF

A NEW BREEDING AREA FOR THE SONG THRUSH
TURDUS PHILOMELOS IN NORTH PORTUGAL

The Song Thrush is a partially migratory Palaearctic species which breeds over a vast area from Western Europe to Central Asia. The Iberian Peninsula constitutes an important wintering area for this species. The movements of the partially migratory populations may be affected by poor weather (Santos 1982, 1985).

The historical evidence concerning the possible breeding of this species in Portugal is mainly restricted to the Portuguese national breeding Atlas, which refers to possible nesting in the Coroa Hills (northeast Portugal) (Rufino 1989). Earlier, Tait (1924) mentioned nesting of this species in the Cabrera Hills (Puebla de Sanábria), on the Spanish side of the boundary of the Montesinho Natural Park (northeast Portugal). More recently, its breeding was confirmed in Portugal for the first time. In 1991, a nest was discovered in Peneda-Gerês National Park (northwest Portugal) (Santarém 1991, Pimenta & Santarém 1996).

In field surveys for the breeding Atlas of the Montesinho Natural Park (north Bragança) (1992–1995) and the breeding Atlas of Nogueira Hills (southwest Bragança) (1995–1996) the Song Thrush was

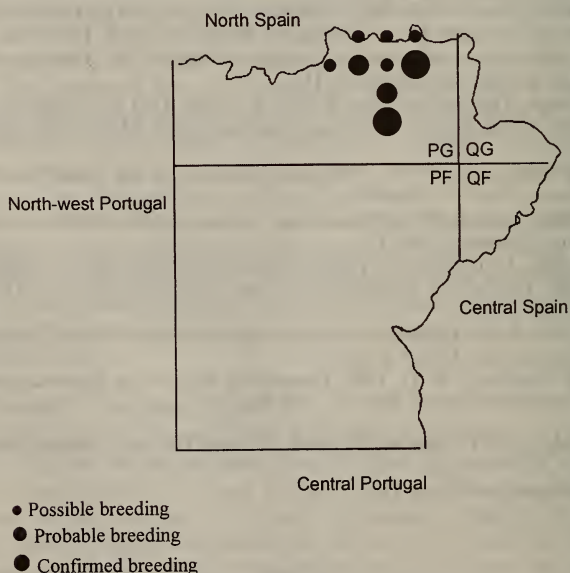


Figure 1. Distribution map of the Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos* breeding area in northeast Portugal, based on 10×10 UTM squares.